

STAT

THE LONDON TIMES
25 October 1975

How Mr Mitchell returned to answer questions on Capitol Hill

From Patrick Brogan
Washington, Oct 24

Mr John Mitchell returned to the Capitol today. Mr Nixon's Attorney-General gave evidence to a Senate committee investigating intelligence matters in the same ornate hall in which the Watergate affair was first exposed to the public on television two years ago.

Mr Mitchell has not changed. He has the same lawyer. Many of the same reporters were there. Senator Howard Baker, the Watergate committee's deputy chairman, is now deputy chairman of the committee on intelligence. It was quite like old times.

Mr Mitchell's evidence was also familiar. He denied that any of his subordinates or the Director of the Central Intelli-

gence Agency had ever told him that mail was being opened. This seemed to conflict with what Mr Richard Helms, who was director of the CIA at the time, told the committee recently.

Mr Mitchell saw no inconsistency and flattened attempts by Senator Frank Church, chairman of the committee, and others to trap him into agreeing that there was a conflict of evidence.

"What other implication could you draw from what you have just said, than that Mr Helms was misleading you?" Mr Church asked.

"I wish the staff had drawn your attention to other sections of Mr Helms's testimony", Mr Mitchell replied. It showed, he said, that many other matters had been discussed at the

meeting in 1971. "The last thing I would do is to characterize anyone's testimony", he added.

Senator Richard Schweiker failed to get much further. "The Postmaster General did not know that mail was being opened, and now you say that the Attorney General did not know that mail was being opened", he shouted. "What I want to know is who was running the Government?"

Mr Mitchell replied: "Do you mean the mail opening part or some other part?" A President could not control every detail of government. Security operations should be entrusted to responsible officials in the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under guidelines laid down by the Executive, Congress and the courts.